

The unholy alliance between the slaughterhouse and the vivisection laboratory : witchcraft of ancient days, or the modern fashion of using excreta / by Nina Hamilton and Brandon (Duchess of Hamilton).

Contributors

Hamilton and Brandon, Nina Mary Benita Poore Douglas-Hamilton, Duchess of, 1878-1951
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between the
Slaughterhouse
and the
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Witchcraft of Ancient Days, or the Modern
Fashion of Using Excreta.

By

NINA HAMILTON AND BRANDON
(Duchess of Hamilton).

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The Unholy Alliance between the Slaughterhouse and the Vivisection Laboratory

IN a previous number of this *Review* attention was drawn to the unholy alliance between the slaughterhouse and the vivisection laboratory. We find a confirmation of this in an article by Dr. Henry R. Harrower, Glendale, California, entitled "*Offal and Excreta in Medicine*" in the *Medical World* of May 29th, 1931. Dr. Harrower writes in reply to a Clinical Lecture by Dr. L. J. Witts, Assistant Physician to Guy's Hospital, reported in the same journal of January 23rd, 1931.

Dr. Witts deplors the use, without proper inspection, of various preparations supposed to be curative, circulated by extensive advertisement; he instances the selling "of a by-product of the petrol industry at a very satisfactory price," also that: "Similar considerations influence the vendors of the endocrine tablets, which are made from the offal of the slaughterhouses."

Dr. Witts' article, which, in many respects, is admirable, is marred by the second of the three specific tests which he states every one should apply before using a new drug:—

- (1) That it is of known chemical composition and assay;
- (2) That its action on experimental animals has been studied;
- (3) That it is worthy of carefully controlled clinical trial.

It is a pity that Dr. Witts, in his article, should fall into the fashionable error that the action of

drugs on experimental animals can be accepted as indicating their action on human beings.

Dr. Harrower has apparently made investigations with regard to the uses of offal from slaughterhouses. I do not know if he is actually employed by any of the great slaughterhouses, but I remember that, when going round the slaughterhouses of Chicago in 1926, we were told that certain scientists were specially attached to the slaughterhouses in order to investigate the "medicinal" value of offal.

Dr. Harrower, after stating that he has devoted a lifetime to the study of endocrinology, proceeds to defend organotherapy from the "calumnies which Dr. Witts and others have thrust upon it." He describes further in his article how, at one time, much of the material, from which endocrine remedies are produced, was discarded:

"Now at the very outset it must be admitted that, at one time, much of the glandular material from which endocrine remedies were produced was discarded and thrown with other offal into the fertiliser tank. This included some of the structures not ordinarily utilised for food. When, in 1901, it was discovered that the adrenal glands were the source of an active principle that later was known as epinephrine or adrenalin, naturally the butchers no longer discarded these tissues. As our knowledge increased and the pituitary gland, for example, was found to be the source of a number of remarkably active substances, not only were these structures not discarded as useless, but very considerable physical effort was expended in the separation of the pituitary body from its bony cup in the skull—a much more difficult and expensive operation, by the way, than the removal of any other glandular structure with the possible exception of the parathyroids. The moment the



adrenal glands were known to have a value, the packers saw to it that they were carefully separated, and they set about processing them for 'the vendors of endocrine tablets' and others who realised the potentialities—real and prospective—of these products.

From that moment, the character of this material changed and, instead of being a useless and even offensive by-product included with the excrement and other useless material, it became much sought after and very expensive. And from that day to this, there has been an increasing demand for this material, previously called offal."

Dr. Harrower, after lamenting that Dr. Witts has not very much interest in the character of the endocrine products, proceeds to say:—

"Nevertheless, those who have been devoting their time and strength to the development of new knowledge along these lines are perfectly willing to agree with this author that 'before using a new drug, you should know: (1) that it is of known chemical composition and assay; (2) that its action on experimental animals has been studied; (3) that it is worthy of carefully controlled clinical trial.'

Many thousands of pounds have been spent in an attempt to learn and assay the chemical composition of the endocrine principles. That this expensive research is not without returns is evidenced, not only by the fact that thyroxin, a chemical substance obtainable from the thyroid gland, can be produced in definite crystalloid form, but that it can be synthesized. The same is true of epinephrine and insulin also—if the experiments of Harington at the University College have been generally verified. In no phase of laboratory research has recourse to animal experimentation been so extensive and so satisfactory as in the

evaluation of the active principles secured from offal. Therefore, the second of the three requirements has been met."

Let it be noted that Dr. Harrower sets the seal on the connection between the slaughter-house and the vivisection laboratory in the sentence "*In no phase of laboratory research has recourse to animal experimentation been so extensive. . .*"*

THE USE OF URINE AS MEDICINE.

In ancient days, if we turn up old recipe books, we find curious substances, such as "cray fishes' eyes" and "crushed snails," being looked on as remedies for certain ills. On reading such accounts one has been amused at the credulousness of our ancestors. However, when reading Dr. Harrower's article, we find that the credulity in regard to the value of odd and, sometimes, disgusting substances, used in the past, is nothing compared with the credulity of the present day in regard to the value of revolting filth.

We read:

"And now comes a new development in endocrine therapy about which there is bound to be a good deal of discussion. I refer to the use of excreta as a source of therapeutic remedies, for a number of research workers have discovered that the *human urine* during pregnancy contains a remarkably active substance, identical in character and physiological activity with the female sex hormone, which, it will be recalled, was separated originally from the follicular fluid of the graafian follicles.

One of the largest manufacturing houses is obtaining urine from as many clinics and hospitals as possible in order to have the raw material from which to prepare Theelin, the crystalline, active

*Italics mine.

principle isolated by Doisy and Allen.* Theelin comes to the profession in perfectly respectable ampoules, and it is undoubtedly a clinically active product capable of physiological evaluation. It must be remembered that the female sex hormone is capable of initiating rut or estrus in ovariectomised animals and of hastening maturity in immature animals. Most spectacular of all, it causes trophic changes in the uterus, ovaries, and adnexa as great as from 1,200 to 1,500 per cent., in as short a time as six weeks."

Meat eating is, no doubt, responsible for many of the follies in this world, for we cannot devour our fellow-creatures and, yet, retain unimpaired a delicate sensitiveness on the point of moral issues. Dr. Harrower, at the end of his article, says the following :—

"In conclusion, allow me to add that this raw material which was once labelled offal, is handled by the packers in exactly the same way as are the meat products for food consumption, with which they are incidental. In America, they are inspected by officials of the Department of Agriculture in exactly the same way as are the food products. In other words, a container of fresh parathyroid glands, for instance, is handled as so much beefsteak, and presumably no more detriment comes to it during this process than comes to the food that we eat."

In the same issue of the *Medical World*, there is a reply by Dr. Witts in which he disposes of much that Dr. Harrower has written in his article. He points out that :

"It was a great profit to the endocrine manufacturer to be able to compress such organs as pituitary, adrenal, testis or ovary into tablets and sell them at fancy prices."

*Italics mine.

That Theelin is "undoubtedly a clinically active product" he is loth to believe, his reasons being stated in an Editorial on the "Clinical Use of Ovarian and Pituitary Hormones," in the *Lancet* of April 4th, 1931, to which he refers :

"The figure of 400,000 mouse units is the dose for subcutaneous injection, and if the oestrin were to be given by mouth an increase of at least ten times would be needed, making 4,000,000 in all. . . . Such large amounts have never been available and it is, therefore, not to be wondered at that in clinical practice little has been achieved, except perhaps where ovarian deficiency is very slight. . . . The quantity needed for human beings is so great that there is no immediate prospect of a sufficient supply being available and cheap enough to make oestrin medication generally practicable." The writer of the Editorial then goes on to discuss the anterior pituitary hormones and states that their only clinical value at present is in the Aschheim-Zondek test for pregnancy. He says that their application in treatment must at present be regarded as little more than guess-work.

He further writes that :

"More recently Koch has written a paper in the *J.A.M.A.*,* 1931, 96 : 937, on the Extraction, Distribution and Action of Testicular Hormones. The hormone which he has isolated differs from Lydin in being active, as has been shown by numerous animal experiments. Nevertheless, in speaking of his own active product, Koch says : 'In the light of these experiments on animals it is reasonable to expect that similar generalisations will hold with reference to man. Thus far there is no indication that this product can be of any value in restoring vigour to the aged or

*Journal of American Medical Association.

neurasthenic. However, if there is an indication for its use, and if the dosage in man is comparable to that found in the capon, the daily injection for a 150 pound man would have to be an amount equivalent to at least 5 pounds of bulls' testis tissue, or 2 gallons of normal male urine. If taken by mouth the dose would presumably be much greater. These deductions based on animal experimentation indicate the probable fallacy of prescribing testis preparations to man. It must be recalled that most of the proprietary preparations now on the market are to be taken by mouth, and that they simply are made up of the desiccated and defatted ram or bull testicles. In the defatting process, no doubt a considerable part of the trace of hormone originally present is removed and discarded.' "

It is time that the public realised that these disgusting preparations—refuse from humans and animals—are already being sold as acceptable substances for human consumption. They are first tested upon laboratory animals, then given wide publicity by advertisement and thereafter bought and consumed owing to the prevailing credulity and ignorance of the public.

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